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held up by an impassable river. He noticed a water-tortoise descending the bank, and followed it. Thus he was led to a ford, which enabled him to cross. Thereupon he vowed that he and his descendants would refrain from eating this animal and its brother species, the tortoise.

Similar myths are current among other clans that taboo aquatic animals. Thus one of the segments of Sie have the special avoidance of the crocodile in addition to the usual fowl avoidance of the Namoos. The head of this segment told me the following myth in explanation. There was a communal fish drive, during which their ancestor, Layɛn, disappeared. He was given up for lost, and next day a party was dispatched to search for the body. But when they reached the river, they found him sitting on the bank with a crocodile at his feet. He told them that the crocodile had saved his life (*fa u ŋovor bah*) by holding him down and covering him up. Hence he vowed that he and his descendants would never again eat crocodile.

In the same way the elders of Gban narrate that 'their ancestor' was suffering with a swollen hand. He asked friends to lance it, but they thought this was unnecessary. Then one day, as he sat resting his hand on his head because of the pain, a large grasshopper of a species with sharply serrated legs (*saŋkaan*) landed on it. The ancestor scared it away. As it leaped off, it kicked out and ripped the skin of the festering hand with its saw-edged legs. This let out the accumulated pus and cured the hand. Thereupon the ancestor vowed, in the phrase that usually concludes these myths, 'May he grow old with his grandson, but no descendant of his should ever again eat the *saŋkaan* (*ɔn kɔrəgən ni u yaaŋa, ka ɔn bii ku le di saŋkaan*)'.

Other myths of this kind relate how the anonymous ancestor was saved from an enemy about to slay him by the opportune appearance of the totemic animal. Thus, according to one of the elders of Sawalɔg: 'Bows were in conflict (*tap ndaa ŋme*)', ('Perhaps', he added, as an afterthought, 'there was a fight with Mamprusi who came to raid for slaves') 'and our ancestor fled, seeking refuge in an animal's burrow. The enemy was about to break open the burrow when a squirrel (*sinsɛrəg*) darted past. They turned to pursue it, and left our ancestor. Thereupon, he vowed never to eat the squirrel again, neither he nor his descendants.'

As this sample of totemic myths shows, the pattern is the same as that of the Namoo myth accounting for the fowl avoidance. They are more unstable in content, however. The two versions of the tortoise myth were obtained from two equally authoritative elders of the same clan. There is, indeed, always an element of speculation, or of *ad hoc* construction, in these myths. Listening to them one often has the feeling that they are being elaborated by logical deduction. The starting-point is the premiss that the totemic avoidance was due to a vow made by 'our ancestor' in gratitude for an extraordinary service that saved his life. The process of reasoning is to deduce an action on the part of the animal consistent with its known peculiarities of appearance and of behaviour. Informants are never able to tell one where and when they first heard these myths. They say vaguely: 'We heard them from our fathers.' This method of reasoning, however, is congenial to the Tallensi. It forms the

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of an enemy in order to hit him. Fighting went on all day in spasms. At nightfall the men retired to their settlements to feast, dance, sing boastful songs, lament the dead, and rest. This was kept up for two or three days at most and then peace was made.[1]

Tale warfare inevitably took this form, since no single segment of the society and neither of the two major groups of clans had political power superior to any other segment or the other group. There is no institutional framework that could be extended so as to make any one segment paramount over the others as a result of a successful war. Every segment holds its allotted place in the whole system in virtue of complementary politico-ritual ties with the other segments, in particular with segments that would be opposed to it in war. They have common values and are subject to common ritual sanctions. Besides, their marriage rules and kinship system spread a wide network of affinal and cognatic relations between clans and lineages. Every Talən has cognatic or affinal kin in every clan within a radius of four or five miles of his own. Though corporate loyalties to his lineage and clan override his private loyalties to his kinsfolk of other clans, whenever the corporate interests of his unit are at stake, they do not extinguish them. Hence a man had to be very careful, in a fight, to avoid killing or injuring any of his own kinsmen who might be on the other side. Hence, also, the prohibition of pillage for one's own advantage. If the enemy was routed, the victors might descend on their settlement, set fire to the homesteads, burn the stored grain, slaughter and eat the live-stock; they could not carry off any of the enemy's possessions. A Namoo clan might fight a Talis clan; but it would be a grave sin against kinship morality for an individual Namoo to plunder or to take captive individual Talis, since they would most likely be the cognates or affines of members of his own clan and therefore indirectly of himself. The idea of killing the women folk or children of the enemy clan—who might easily be one's clan sisters or nephews—would have seemed monstrous.

Last, but not least, Tale economic organization is incompatible with warfare for material gain. There was and is no such thing as a tribe-wide or clan economy. Occupational differentiation, other than the division of labour between the sexes and in accordance with age, has barely emerged. Local trade is becoming increasingly important, but there was in the past no commerce other than barter and occasional petty trade. The Tallensi were and are still sedentary cultivators, using a primitive

[1] Tallensi often say that many men were killed and wounded in these fights. As they never counted their casualties it is impossible to get accurate figures from them. But taking account of the weapons used, the manner of fighting, and the duration of the fights, it is difficult to believe that casualties were in fact very heavy. As far as I can estimate, no more than three to four thousand men, fighting in scattered contingents of about 20 to 50 men, would be engaged in a general war. A settlement like Tongo, the largest in Taleland, would turn out between 200 and 300 fighting men at the outside. Putting together all that I was told, I would say that three or four men killed and a dozen wounded would have been regarded as a very heavy casualty list for Tongo in a day's fighting. It must be remembered, though, that the mortality from wounds was probably high, as the main non-magical treatment used was to suck the poison and pus out of the wound.

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593 husband and wife, the man is more his wife's physical and spiritual
581 protector than her lord and master. Baŋ of Zubiuŋ-Yakora and Nindɔyat
of Zubiuŋ-Kpayarayayar had a complicated dispute over an ancient
[578] cattle debt. It culminated in blows when Nindɔyat tried to lay hands
on Baŋ's wife. That, declared Baŋ, he would not stand for.

581 A man is responsible for ensuring the beneficence of the ancestor
spirits and other mystical powers towards his wife; and that he does this
753 out of a sense of moral duty is evident when his wife gets ill. I well
●757 remember two particularly pathetic cases. Baripeta, a handsome, indus-
trious, intelligent, and popular young man, had one young wife. Shortly
after the birth of their child, she was stricken with leprosy. The Tallensi
are generally prepared to admit that this disease is incurable by their
magico-medical methods. They say that it is contagious to the sufferer's
young children. The bodily corruption of the disease disgusts them,
and they say that lepers are difficult to live with as they become bitter
and vindictive. Baripeta knew all this as well as anybody else. His wife
had become an economic and social burden instead of a helpmate. Yet
he continued to cherish her, and, poor though he was, to try treatment
after treatment for her, at the cost of many fowls and goats and pence.
It is true that a jural principle was involved. As she had contracted the
disease in his home under his care, he was responsible for her. He could
not return her to her father, for instance. But it was plain from his
behaviour and talk that he continued to care for her, with even greater
consideration than usual, not out of submission to a customary jural rule
but out of a feeling of immediate duty towards and concern for her.

It was the same with Ɔmara. His senior wife fell a victim to leprosy
when her eldest children had already reached adulthood. He went to
great expense in trying to get her cured. Explaining this to me, he said
that, firstly, a sick person's nearest relatives never give up hope of a
cure, and secondly, he was her husband, therefore he must try his utmost
to save her. If he gave up she would be mortally hurt and might pine
away. It was his duty to her and to her children.

The Sexual Relationship as the Corner-stone of Marriage

581 The moral bond of husband and wife is founded on their sexual
relationship, conceived as the means to the end of reproduction. It is
this that makes the sexual relationship the corner-stone of marriage.

581 The simplest proof of the significance of the sexual relationship is the
fact that a marriage is not properly consummated until coitus takes place
585 between the partners. This is seen most clearly when a widow remarries.
587 She may be given in marriage to one of her deceased husband's brothers
by the head of his effective minimal lineage, or she may be claimed by
her deceased husband's brother, and may acquiesce, to begin with. If
[837] she has sexual relations with her new husband she becomes his wife,
whether or not the formalities of remarriage are completed. If she

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769 577 167 when they were left as heads of their lineage segments they had to come home. Their fathers' spirits would have killed them if they had not done so. Dema is frankly happy to be home again amongst his own people after his wanderings. Pal, who is dependent on farming for his living, still speaks with a tinge of regret of the fine farm he had to abandon in Mampurugu. But he feels that he had no option, and there is even an element of pride in his submission to the *force majeure* of his dead father, since he is now the head of his lineage segment. It was the same with Na'abzɔ, Kayar, Yinworəb, Baŋgam-Teroog, and many others, too numerous to mention, who returned home after years abroad in order to 'give water' to their fathers.

769 577 751 While the whole ancestor cult is an elaborate expression of filial piety towards the dead parents, one of the commonest ways in which the observer comes across it is in the practice of leechcraft. Almost every native owns some 'roots (*ŋaya*)' for the treatment of sickness, and the therapeutic value of the roots lies not so much in their physical properties as in the fact that their owner is able, by right of ownership, to mobilize magical virtue in their support. As a preliminary to the curative rites the owner of the roots always calls upon his or her ancestors for a blessing, and this opens with the phrase 'My father, I shall call you (first). You have no concern with this matter, but I call on you (to help me) for the sake of begetting, because you begot me (*Mba, n-na mbuola nyɛni. Nyɛn baha ka dɛni, ka mbuoli la dɔyam la zug, nyɛn dɔyəm la zugu*).'

577 593 769 Naturally the ritual aspect of filial piety is of greater importance for a man than for a woman, considered in terms of their social personalities and with regard to the father; for he stands for the lineage and clan, with all that membership of these units implies, for the land and other patrimonial property, and for the ancestral home (*daboog*). But it is important for a woman, too, and in relation to the mother as well. A woman is the spiritual ward (*sɛyəraan*) of one of her paternal forbears and remains under that ancestor's or ancestress's guardianship all her life. And it is through her father that she maintains good ritual relations with her ancestor guardian—either through sacrifices made by her father on her behalf or through the intermediation of her father's spirit when he is dead. Moreover, her father's spirit is of great importance [782] to her children. It is significant that if a male line dies out a female survivor takes on the duty of sacrificing to the lineage shrines, which she can only approach through her father's spirit.

A man's mother's spirit is of as much importance for him as an individual as his father's. He has a shrine dedicated to her and other shrines dedicated to ancestors of hers. A mother's shrine is often the first after his *Yin* shrine to be dedicated by a man and is always felt to be more peculiarly his own than a father's shrine, which is heritable by half-brothers. A man would not return from abroad because of the demands

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one of the widows, it met with general approval among the men of Zubiuŋ. 604

The relationship of Kpɛlimɛrəme and his mother's full brother Kuur was similar. One incident may be quoted as a particularly forcible illustration of the intimacy and attachment that often exist between *ahəb* and *ahəŋ*. Kuur was suffering from a very painful and repulsive skin disease which had finally attacked his genitals, turning them into a disgusting, ulcerated area. When Lɔyani, Kuur's younger paternal brother, came to ask me for some medicine to treat this sickness, he said that the mere sight of it made him vomit—and, as he remarked, he was known to be a man of stout heart (*suhkpeemərdaan*) in dealing with sickness or death. I gave Lɔyani some disinfectant, and advised cleansing and bathing the affected parts with it. Lɔyani looked dubious and then explained that Kuur was in too great pain to carry out the treatment himself, Kuur's children were all too young to do it, and his disease was so revolting that none of his more distant relatives would undertake the task. Then an idea struck him. There was someone who would do it—Kpɛlimɛrəme. And in fact Kpɛlimɛrəme did undertake the unpleasant task and performed it faithfully for several weeks. 'Do you think,' said Kpɛlimɛrəme to me, 'I would let my *ahəb* die if I knew of any way of saving him?' 604 757

Such a relationship is common between sister's son and mother's full brother. As a rule there is not such great intimacy and devotion between a man and his half-sister's son. It is, however, only a matter of degree. Ɔmara was very attached to his half-sister's children, especially to her eldest daughter. He was as proud of her marriage to the Chief of Bongo as her own father was. Yɛanbɔrigya, like most Tallensi, was a constant visitor to his *ahəb* at Samiit. Once at a public sacrifice at which he was the only non-member of Samiit present, his mother's brother's clansmen teased him saying that he might as well come and join them for good. Anyhow, they chaffed him, he was really a son of Samiit since his mother's bride-price had not been fully paid.[1] He rejoined, jokingly, that he belonged both to Samiit and to his own clan. 604

As a rule, too, a sister's daughters do not after marriage have such constant and close contacts with their mother's brother's people as a sister's sons. Any interest a woman has in relatives other than her husband's people is chiefly directed towards her parental family, and she keeps in touch with her mother's brother's people through her mother and brothers. A woman lacks the bond of common interests due to identity of sex that reinforces the ties of mother's brother and sister's son. A woman also has no need to maintain ritual relations with her

[1] If a woman dies leaving adult sons before the fourth cow of her bride-price is claimed, her paternal kin are normally obliged to waive it in favour of her sons. This is interpreted as a sign of their quasi-parental interest in the sons' welfare and marriages.